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Action

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Info

FROM: BONN

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 354, AUGUST 17, 5 PM

PRIORITY

ACTION DEPARTMENT 354; INFORMATION BERLIN 111, LONDON 79, PARIS 95, MOSCOW 58

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VIEWS OBJECTIVELY, WEST GERMAN AND WEST BERLIN REACTION TO SEALING OF BERLIN SECTOR BORDER IS HIGHLY EMOTIONAL AND DISPROPORTIONATE TO GRAVITY OF SITUATION. IT EXISTS, HOWEVER, AND MUST BE RECKONED WITH AS FURTHER AND CONVINCING EVIDENCE THAT GERMAN PEOPLE ARE NOT PREPARED TO ACCEPT MOVES WHICH DEEPEN DIVISION OF GERMANY AND PUSH REUNIFICATION FURTHER INTO FUTURE. TO PUT IT ANOTHER WAY, FEDREP'S CURRENT FOREIGN POLICY WILL BE SUPPORTED BY PUBLIC OPINION ONLY SO LONG AS IT PROVIDES THAT MODICUM OF HOPE FOR EVENTUAL SOLUTION WHICH PERSISTS UNDER STATUS QUO. AS "ABNORMAL" AS THIS STATUS QUO MAY BE, FURTHER DRAMATIC CHANGES -- EVEN THOUGH THEY BE IN ESSENCE LITTLE MORE THAN MANIFESTATIONS OF "REALITIES" OF SITUATION -- CAN, IN MY VIEW, ONLY RESULT IN ULTIMATE RADICAL REORIENTATION OF GERMANY POLICY. WHILE THIS MAY TAKE TIME I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT IT IS LONG-RANGE GOAL OF SOVIET POLICY RE GERMANY, FOR THERE IS NO REASON TO BELIEVE THAT SOVIETS WILL BE CONTENT FOR LONG WITH CONSOLIDATION OF COMMUNIST REGIME IN SOVIET ZONE, TO WHICH THEIR PRESENT MOVES ARE DIRECTED. IT IS FOR THIS REASON THAT I HAVE FELT OUR OBJECTIVE SHOULD NOT BE CONFINED SOLELY TO DEFENSE OF OUR POSITION IN WEST BERLIN, BUT RATHER TO PREVENTION OF SUCH CONSOLIDATION.

AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND, I AM NOT OVERLY CONCERNED THAT WEST GERMAN OPINION HAS PRESENTLY BOILED UP IN SUCH IMPATIENT AND SHARP MANNER. THERE REMAINS, I AM CONVINCED, BASIC CONFIDENCE

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-2- 354, AUGUST 17, 5 PM, FROM: BONN

IN WESTERN (I.E. US) POLICY, AND FEELINGS SHOULD SOON CALM DOWN PROVIDED WESTERN ACTIONS NOW UNDER CONSIDERATION, SUCH AS TTD BAN, STRENGTHENING OF BERLIN GARRISON, ETC., ARE CARRIED OUT AND BECOME KNOWN. ADENAUER HAS NOW INITIATED EFFORTS TO INDUCE PATIENCE, AND EDITORIAL COMMENTS, SUCH AS TODAY'S DIE WELT, WILL SUPPORT THESE EFFORTS. MOREOVER, AS CRISIS DEVELOPS, GERMAN PEOPLE WILL COME TO SEE SOUNDNESS OF WESTERN POLICY AND BE REASSURED AS TO FIRMNESS OF OUR DEFENSE OF INTERESTS WHICH WE HAVE IN COMMON WITH THEM.

I AM, HOWEVER, SHARPLY DISTURBED BY CRISIS OF CONFIDENCE IN BERLIN. ALARM WHICH EAST GERMAN ACTIONS HAS AROUSED MAY BE UNREALISTIC, BUT ON OTHER HAND COMMUNISTS ARE CONTENDING THAT WEST BERLIN CONFIDENCE, WHICH HAS BEEN SO FIRMLY HELD FOR PAST DECADE, AND WHICH IS MOST VITAL FACTOR IN CITY'S CONTINUED EXISTENCE, IS UNREALISTIC. I ENDORSE MURROW'S ABLE ANALYSIS IN BERLIN'S 190 TO DEPARTMENT, AND URGE THAT STEPS BE TAKEN, AS HE SUGGESTS, TO IMPROVE PSYCHOLOGICAL CLIMATE. STEPS UNDER CONSIDERATION, MENTIONED ABOVE, SHOULD BE CARRIED OUT SOONEST. THEY WILL NOT, HOWEVER, BE ENOUGH FOR BERLINERS, AND I URGE THAT WE CONSIDER SOME FURTHER, DRAMATIC STEP WHICH WILL REASSURE THEM. MY SUGGESTION WOULD BE A PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT TO THE PEOPLE OF BERLIN (NOT TO ADENAUER OR BRANDT) IN WHICH HE MIGHT SAY TO THEM THAT THEY ARE MUCH IN HIS THOUGHTS, THAT HE WILL TAKE ALL APPROPRIATE AND PEACEFUL MEANS TO RESTORE INTEGRITY OF BERLIN AS A WHOLE CITY, AND THAT HE HAS CONFIDENCE IN THEM AS HE KNOWS THEY HAVE CONFIDENCE IN AMERICA AND ITS ALLIES.

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